

## Coordination of Local Planning

The Mitigation Section of the State Emergency Management Division has worked with local jurisdictions to encourage and support local hazard mitigation planning since publication of hazard mitigation planning regulations (44 CFR Parts 201 and 206) in the Federal Register in February 2002. The section's staff provides ongoing assistance through on-site visits, by coordinating information requests of state government, and by participating in local plan development activities.

The Mitigation Section has in place an extensive network of assistance that provides support, guidance, and information to local jurisdictions preparing local hazard mitigation plans. Among the assistance provided includes:

- Meeting with local jurisdictions to review hazard mitigation planning requirements or provide training, to assist with plan development activities, or to review draft plans. From early 2002 through October 1, 2003, the Emergency Management Division's Mitigation Section analysts conducted 74 meetings involving about 200 jurisdictions to discuss hazard mitigation planning requirements, provide training or other assistance, and 12 meetings with 9 jurisdictions in which the jurisdictions' draft hazard mitigation plans were reviewed.
- Identifying a state hazard mitigation analyst to act as the primary point of contact and provider of technical assistance for each jurisdiction. Examples of technical assistance include reviewing sections of developing plans and providing feedback, providing information from FEMA regional planning meetings to local planners, identifying information sources at state and national levels, interpreting state and federal guidelines, and distributing planning examples and approved plans.
- Providing planning grants through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program, and Flood Management Assistance program. Since January 2002, 33 local jurisdictions (counties, cities, school districts, etc.) received more than \$2.17 million from these mitigation programs to help them develop local hazard mitigation plans. Additionally, 12 jurisdictions receiving \$10.7 million for projects in the second round of Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding from the Nisqually earthquake disaster of 2001 are required to develop hazard mitigation plans as a condition of their receipt of the grant; no specific funds were provided for planning.
- Providing planning software designed to help local jurisdictions prepare their plans. The Emergency Management Division's Mitigation Section purchased copies of Mitigation 20/20 software and made them available at no charge to local jurisdictions with the understanding recipients would prepare a local hazard mitigation plan by November 2004. Twenty-three of 39 counties, and cities of Seattle and Tacoma, participated in this program. Two training sessions conducted by the software developer in November 2002 oriented 60 new users to the software; again, training was provided at no charge to the local jurisdictions.

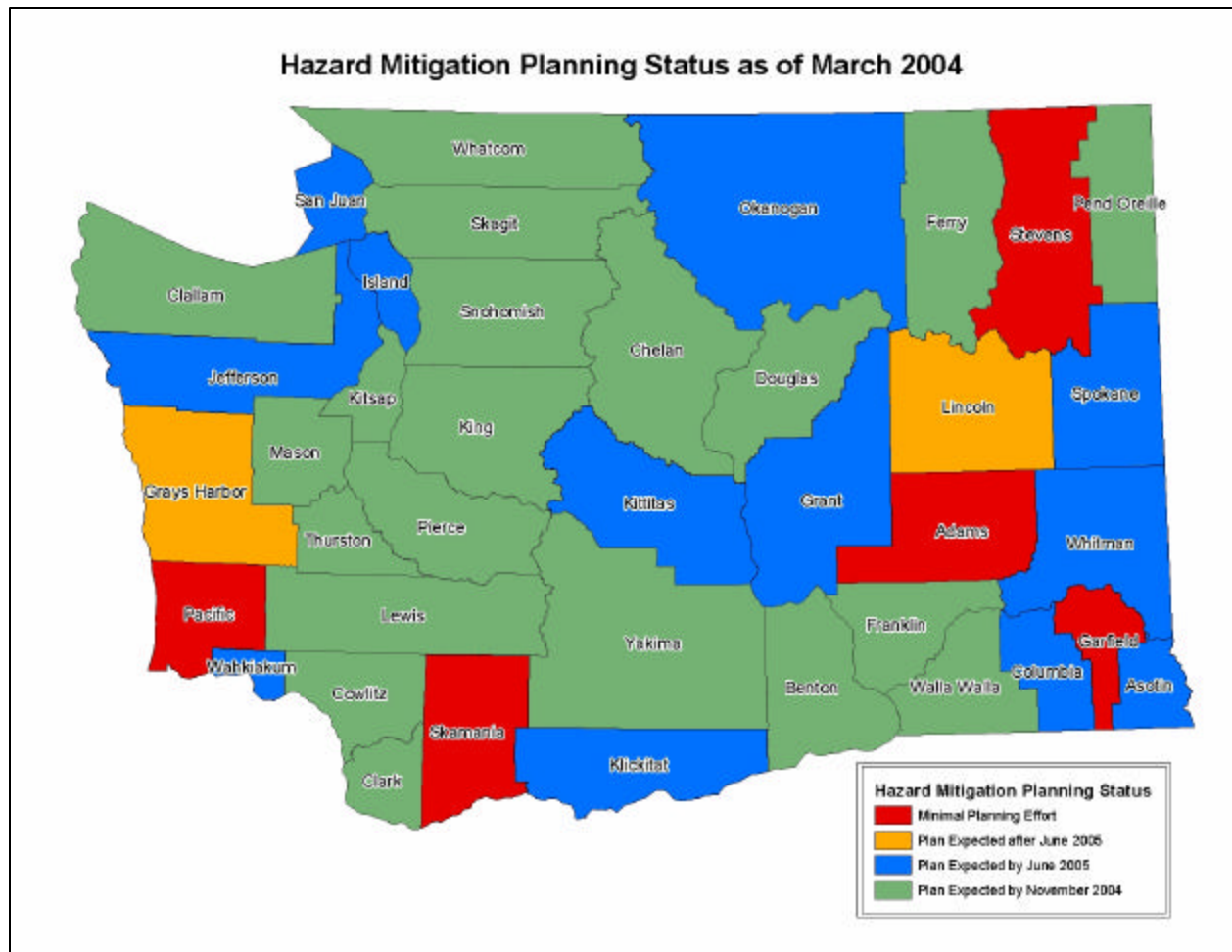
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- Distributing hazard profiles, socioeconomic descriptions of nine regions of the state, and assessments of regional vulnerability for the state-identified hazards to local jurisdictions. These documents make up part of the state hazard mitigation plan. The purpose of distributing these documents was to help shorten the local plan development cycle by allowing local jurisdictions to tailor well-researched hazard information to local conditions and to perform risk assessments on local facilities. As of the end of October 2003, about 40 local jurisdictions around the state received copies of these documents.
- Connecting local jurisdictions with other state agencies that have information useful for hazard mitigation planning. For example:
  - The Department of Community Trade and Economic Development provided information on growth management.
  - The Departments of Ecology and Natural Resources provided information and coordination on environmental and growth management issues.
  - The Department of Employment Security provided information on the economy.
  - The Department of Transportation provided analysis and information on transportation infrastructure and the state ferry system.
  - The University of Washington provided earthquake hazard information and assessment assistance.
- Developing and distributing a “lessons learned and successes” document based on the efforts of early local jurisdiction planning efforts. The document was provided to jurisdictions just starting their planning; it formed the basis of initial staff assistance visits and information exchanges with many jurisdictions.
- Writing and distributing a newsletter about every other month to provide local jurisdictions with the latest information, guidance and suggestions related to hazard mitigation planning. Every local emergency manager in the state, as well as recipients of recent hazard mitigation grants receives the newsletter via email.
- Providing information and assistance in map development through Geographic Information System software, and instruction in FEMA’s Hazards United States (HAZUS) software program. Since early 2002, the Emergency Management Division’s Analysis and Plans Section provided GIS software to 22 counties and 2 cities at no charge, and provided 27 counties with HAZUS software. More than 110 individuals received training on HAZUS in 10 classes and workshops, and another 25 individuals received orientations or overview presentations. Additionally, a HAZUS users group provides support to users in local jurisdictions.

As of March 2004, the state anticipates 20 of 39 counties will have approved local hazard mitigation plans complete by November 1. These plans cover approximately 71 percent of the state's population of more than 6 million. By June 2005, the state

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expects 32 of 39 counties to have plans covering 84 percent of the state's population. Additionally, hazard mitigation plans will not cover approximately 16 percent of the state's population because the cities and towns in which they live in will not be part of a county plan or their county will not have completed a plan. The map below provides a synopsis of the status of local hazard mitigation planning throughout the state.



## Integrating Local Plans into the State Hazard Mitigation Plan

As of April 10, 2004, the Federal Emergency Management Agency approved eight local hazard mitigation plans, only two of which were multi-jurisdictional plans. After reviewing both approved plans as well as a number of draft plans submitted for state review, the Mitigation Section of the State Emergency Management Division determined that the goals and objectives of these local plans and the goals and objectives of this state plan closely track with one another. Also, the review indicated that local jurisdictions evaluated hazards and risks in a similar manner and came to similar conclusions as those found within this state plan.

For the second edition of the State Hazard Mitigation Plan (c. 2007), it is estimated that more than 30 multi-jurisdiction local hazard mitigation plans will be completed and

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approved. This number of plans, and the areas they represent, will provide more than sufficient information to influence both the Risk Assessment and the Mitigation Strategy of the state plan.

The Mitigation Section of the State Emergency Management Division's Mitigation Section and members of the State Hazard Mitigation Advisory Team will review risk assessments and mitigation strategies of approved local plans when preparing the next edition of the state plan. Information in local plans that supplements and improves the accuracy and depth of the state plan will be added to the plan.

For example, such information may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Locations of hazard areas identified by the local jurisdiction. This includes the location of critical areas defined by the State's Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.050, RCW 36.70A.172 (1), and Chapter 365-190 and 365-195 WAC). The act defines critical areas to include frequently flooded areas and geologically hazardous areas. Geologically hazardous areas are those subject to erosion, landslide, seismic hazard, mine hazard, volcanic hazard, and other geologic events including tsunamis, mass wasting, debris falls, rock falls, and differential settlement.
- Information on populations and structures located in or near local hazard areas/critical areas. Structures of concern include residential housing as well as critical facilities such as schools, fire and police stations, hospitals, water and sewage treatment facilities.
- Information on projected growth in or near identified local hazard areas/critical areas.
- Identifying mitigation goals and strategies that require state attention through inclusion in the state plan.

Local jurisdictions and hazard experts will review revised state Hazard Profiles and the revised Risk Assessment to ensure their accuracy and completeness after local information has been incorporated. The State Hazard Mitigation Advisory Team, participating state planning agencies, and local jurisdictions will review the state plan's mitigation strategy after local information has been incorporated to ensure its accuracy and completeness.

## **Prioritizing Recipients for Hazard Mitigation Grants**

The process used by the state of Washington to review, evaluate and select projects for the various mitigation grant programs is based on years of public participation and supports the state's home-rule form of government. Home rule provides that government at the lowest-possible level is the one best prepared to make decisions that affect it the most – including hazard mitigation projects.

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Washington's concept is to support all local mitigation efforts. Typically, hazard mitigation funds following a disaster are available to all eligible agencies and organizations statewide for projects that reduce the risk of future damage, regardless of the hazard being addressed (i.e., funds available following an earthquake disaster can address problems presented by other hazards). Occasionally, when mitigation funds are limited, grants can be restricted to specific areas of the state or address specific hazards. This occurred following the October 2003 flood and storm disaster, when construction grants were limited to projects designed to address repetitive losses within the counties declared as disaster areas; planning grants were available to eligible applicants statewide, however.

The state's Hazard Mitigation Program uses a competitive system to evaluate and recommend for funding only the most environmentally sound and cost-effective projects. Projects recommended for funding are those that best document their ability to reduce future impacts of natural disasters as well as demonstrate cost-effectiveness through a benefit-cost review.

Potential projects are evaluated using a weighted scoring process emphasizing protection of life and property, reduction of risk, and cost-effectiveness. State Emergency Management Division's Mitigation Section staff clearly communicates and demonstrates the importance of cost-effective projects to potential grant applicants throughout the application process, in applicant briefings and application materials, for example. Staff from the Mitigation Section works with each potential grant applicant to ensure that proposed projects provide as great a public benefit as possible, with a minimum public benefit of at least one dollar for each dollar spent on the project.

Only projects with a minimum benefit-cost ratio of 1-to-1 receive further consideration by a review committee.

### **Evaluation, Approval of Proposed Mitigation Projects**

A Mitigation Grant Review Committee of state and local representatives evaluates and prioritizes eligible mitigation grant applications. The committee uses a scoring system to prioritize projects according to both federal eligibility criteria (listed in both the Hazard Mitigation Program administrative plan and the application documents; see Tab 10) and the state eligibility criteria listed above (published in application documents).

For each round of grant funding, a committee of at least five members, as described below, is convened:

- Two individuals from the Military Department – usually the Deputy State Coordinating Officer and the State Hazard Mitigation Programs Manager.

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- One supervisor or designee of the particular state agencies related to the particular type/nature of the disaster (example: Department of Ecology representative for floods).
- Two individuals, one from a city, and one from a county or appropriate special service district, located outside of the declared disaster area or from a community not applying for mitigation funds.

The committee uses a scoring system that emphasizes seriousness of risk when considering an applicant's responses to the following federal and state eligibility criteria. Among the criteria receiving greatest weight in scoring are those dealing with reduction of risk posed by hazards, prevention of repetitive losses, and protection of critical areas including frequently flooded areas and geologically hazardous areas.

Criteria for construction (both structural and non-structural) projects (from Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs Project Evaluation Score Sheet, October 2003):

- Selection of the best alternative.
  - Applicant must demonstrate, through a written narrative that describes each alternative considered, that the alternative chosen is the one most practical, effective, and environmentally sound among the possible solutions. Applicants must show at least three alternatives.
- Federal and state criteria. Does the application/project show that:
  - The jurisdiction has an approved natural hazard reduction plan?
  - If yes, is this project identified within it?
  - It protects lives and reduce public risk?
  - It reduces the level of hazard damage vulnerability in existing structures and developed property?
  - It reduces the number of vulnerable structures through acquisition, relocation or retrofit? Does the jurisdiction describe plans for the acquired property (open space, etc.)?
  - The project addresses structures in the Repetitive Flood Loss areas by acquisition, elevation, or relocation?
  - It avoids inappropriate future development in areas that are vulnerable to the hazard damage?
  - It solves a problem independently, or functions as a beneficial part of an overall solution?
  - It provides a cooperative, inter-jurisdictional/inter-agency solution to the problem?
  - It provides a long-term mitigation solution (not a short-term fix) in locations that experience repetitive hazard damage?
  - Address emerging hazard damage issues? (e.g., Damage caused by storm water runoff at build-out densities, trees in right-of-ways, identification of new EQ faults, etc.)

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- Restore or protect natural resource, recreational, open space, and/or built environment values?
- Show development and implementation of comprehensive programs, standards, and regulations that reduce future hazard damage?
- Increase public awareness of hazards, preventive measures, and emergency responses to disasters?
- Upon completion, have affordable operation and maintenance costs that the applicant jurisdiction is committed to support?
- Has the jurisdiction documented how the project improves its ability to protect its critical areas, as required by the Growth Management Act?

Criteria for planning projects (from Mitigation Grant Programs Planning Application Evaluation Score Sheet, October 2003):

### Planning process:

- How well do they describe how they will provide the public an opportunity to participate in the planning process?
- How well do they describe how they will include neighboring communities, local and regional agencies, business, academia, and other interests in the planning process?
- How well do they describe previous planning efforts and how they will incorporate them into this all hazards planning process?

### Risk assessment element:

- If the applicant has a current Risk Assessment, does it contain a description of the type, location, and extent of all natural hazards that can affect the jurisdiction?
- If the community does not have a Risk Assessment, how well do they describe how they will complete it?
- How well did they document previous occurrences of hazard events and the probability of future hazard events?
- Has the applicant completed a vulnerability assessment for the hazards identified in their risk assessment that includes:
  - The types and numbers of existing and future buildings, infrastructure and critical facilities located in the identified hazard areas;
  - An estimate of the potential dollar losses to vulnerable structures identified and a description of the methodology used to develop this estimate;
  - A general description of land uses and development trends within the community so that mitigation options can be considered in future land use decisions.
- If the applicant has not completed a vulnerability assessment, how well did they describe how they will complete the above elements of a vulnerability assessment?

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Mitigation strategy element:

- If the applicant currently has a mitigation strategy, does it contain a description of local mitigation goals and objectives with proposed strategies, programs, and actions to reduce or avoid long-term vulnerabilities to the identified hazards?
- If not, how well does the applicant describe how they will develop these goals, objectives, strategies, and programs?
- Has the applicant conducted an analysis of a comprehensive range of specific mitigation actions and projects being considered to reduce the effects of each identified hazard, with particular emphasis on new and existing buildings and infrastructure?
- If not, how well did they describe how they will complete the analysis and what areas it will cover?
- How well did the applicant describe how they will develop an action plan describing the actions in the analysis element and how they will prioritize and implement the plan?
- Did the applicant develop a set of specific cost effective mitigation projects that will reduce damages from future disaster that included a summary of how they identified and prioritized these actions?
- If not, did the applicant describe what types of projects they might consider and how they would prioritize them?
- Did the applicant describe how these actions will support the mitigation goals and priorities of the community?
- Did the applicant provide a description of their process to reduce the number of NFIP target repetitive loss properties in the community that included a summary of the process?
- If not, did the applicant describe how it would address the repetitive flood loss issue in their community?
- How well did the applicant describe how their community is committed to reducing damages from future natural disasters through the development of partnerships with businesses, academia and other private and non-profit interests able to provide financial or technical assistance in support of the community's mitigation goals and priorities to include specific examples of any current activities?
- How well did the applicant describe the development trends within their community and discuss actions to mitigate disaster losses in these areas?
- Did the applicant discuss if their plan will require any interagency agreements to implement?

Plan maintenance element. How well does the applicant address the following?

- A section describing the established method and schedule of monitoring, evaluating, and updating the mitigation plan within a five-year cycle.
- A process by which the applicant will incorporate the requirements of the mitigation plan into other planning mechanisms, such as comprehensive or capital improvement plans.
- A discussion on how the community will maintain public participation in the planning process.



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- Plans for formal adoption of the plan by the community.
- A section describing how the local plan will be implemented and administered by the local government including discussion of how officials will approach and manage mitigation actions involving the acquisition of private property.

Additionally, to be eligible for hazard mitigation grant funding, potential grant applicants have to demonstrate they are in good standing with the National Flood Insurance Program, and have either a current approved Critical Areas Ordinance and / or a current approved comprehensive land-use plan as required by the State Growth Management Act.

Once the Mitigation Grant Review Committee evaluates and ranks proposed applications in priority order, the State Emergency Management Division's Mitigation Section forwards the ranked applications to the Region 10 office of the Federal Emergency Management Agency for additional review, approval, and funding.